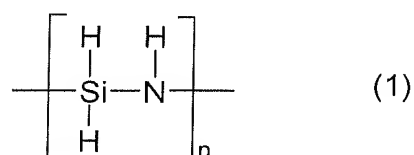


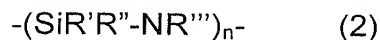
Amendments to the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A coating composition for coating a surface, comprising 10-20% by weight of perhydropolysilazane of the formula 1



where n is an integer and is such that the perhydropolysilazane has a number-average molecular weight of from 150 to 150 000 g/mol, a solvent and a catalyst and, ~~optionally~~, one or more cobinders, wherein the coating composition is cured to the surface and the coating composition, when cured, has a thickness of from 2 to 20 micrometers.

2. (Currently Amended) The coating composition as claimed in claim 1, wherein the one or more cobinders is an organopolysilazane of the formula 2



where R', R'' and R''' are identical or different and are each either hydrogen or unsubstituted or substituted organic radicals, with the proviso that R', R'' and R''' can not all be hydrogen, and where n is such that the organopolysilazane has a number-average molecular weight of from 150 to 150 000 g/mol, with the proviso that the mass fraction of the organopolysilazane, based on the perhydropolysilazane, is at least 1% and not more than 100%.

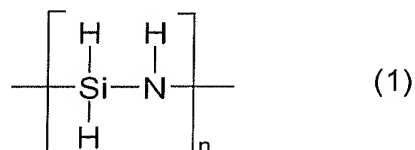
3. (Currently Amended) The coating composition as claimed in claim 1, wherein the mass fraction of the one or more cobinders, based on the perhydropolysilazane, is at least 1% and not more than 100%.
4. (Currently Amended) The coating composition as claimed in claim 3, wherein the one or more cobinders is a cellulose derivative, a polyester, a modified polyester, a phenolic resin, a melamine resin, an acrylate, epoxide or polyisocyanate.
5. (Currently Amended) The coating composition as claimed in claim 1, further comprising 0.001% to 5% by weight of a catalyst.
6. (Currently Amended) The coating composition as claimed in claim 5, wherein the catalyst is an N-heterocyclic compound, a mono-, di- or trialkylamine, an organic or inorganic acid, a peroxide, a metal carboxylate, an acetylacetonate complex, a metal powder or an organometallic compound.
7. (Currently Amended) A method for protecting a substrate having a surface comprising the step of applying a coating composition as claimed in claim 1 to the surface and curing the coating composition to the surface.
8. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 7, wherein the surface is a metal or polymer surface.
9. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 7, wherein the coating, when cured, has a thickness of from 3 to 10 micrometers.
10. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 7, wherein the substrate is a wheel rim.

11. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a protective coating on metal or plastic surface, wherein the surface may have already been coated, comprising the steps of applying a coating composition as claimed in claim 1 to the surface and curing the coating at a temperature of from 10 to 200°C.
12. (Currently Amended) The coating composition as claimed in claim 2, wherein the mass fraction of the organopolysilazane, based on the perhydropolysilazane, is 10% to 70%.
13. (Currently Amended) The coating composition as claimed in claim 2, wherein the mass fraction of the organopolysilazane, based on the perhydropolysilazane, is 15% to 50%.
14. (Currently Amended) The coating composition as claimed in claim 1, wherein the mass fraction of the one or more cobinders, based on the perhydropolysilazane, is 10% to 70%.
15. (Currently Amended) The coating composition as claimed in claim 1, wherein the mass fraction of the one or more cobinders, based on the perhydropolysilazane, is 20% to 50%.
16. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 10, wherein the wheel rim is an aluminum rim.
17. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 11, wherein the curing step occurs at a temperature between 25 to 160°C.

18. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 11, wherein the curing step occurs at a temperature between 80 to 150°C.

19. (Previously Presented) A metal or plastic surface having a protective coating thereon according to claim 11.

20. (Currently Amended) A coating composition for coating a surface, comprising at least one perhydropolysilazane of the formula 1



where n is an integer and is such that the perhydropolysilazane has a number-average molecular weight of from 150 to 150 000 g/mol, a solvent and a catalyst and, optionally, one or more cobinders, wherein the coating composition is cured to the surface and the coating composition, when cured, has a thickness of from 2 to 20 micrometers.

21. (Cancelled)

22. (Currently Amended) The coating composition as claimed in claim 20, wherein the coating composition, when cured, has a thickness of 3 to 10 micrometers.

23. (Currently Amended) A surface coated with the coating composition according to claim 20, wherein the surface is a metal or plastic.

24. (Previously Presented) The surface as claimed in claim 23, wherein the surface is the surface of a wheel rim.
25. (Currently Amended) A wheel rim having a surface coated with the coating composition of claim 20.
26. (Currently Amended) A wheel rim having a surface coated with the coating composition of claim 1.
27. (Previously Presented) The wheel rim as claimed in claim 25, wherein the wheel rim is an aluminum wheel rim.
28. (Previously Presented) The wheel rim as claimed in claim 26, wherein the wheel rim is an aluminum wheel rim.